THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSIC RAGTIME

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DID PERCY WENRICH WRITE 'HELLO DOLLY'?

or, 'Hello, Mrs. Wenrich'

by Boston Correspondent Roger C. Hankins

If I were asked what three songs I associate with Percy Wenrich, I would say: 'Put on Your Old Grey Bonnet' (not intended literally). . . 'When You Wore a Tulip' . . . and 'Hello Dolly.'

There could be no argument about the first two -- Wenrich wrote them. Unfortunately, he didn't write 'Hello Dolly.' Yet it seems as if he should have. He wrote songs by the hundreds, plus a few choice rags. But the sheet music of his songs in many cases makes more reference on their covers to an actress named Dolly Connolly than they do to the songs themselves: "Dolly Connolly's latest song" . . . "a big hit with Dolly Connolly" . . . "Dolly Connolly says 'this is my favorite song'", etc. A 1909 two-step entitled 'Dublin Daisies' is dedicated to Dolly. In short, Percy Wenrich acted as a one-man press agent for Dolly, and she no doubt contributed immensely to the popularity of his songs. And finally one day he married her. But he didn't write 'Hello Dolly.'

Trio of Wenrich's 1907 'Flower Girl'

Or did he? 'Hello Dolly' has been subjected to the usual copyright infringement suits that are the lot of all national hits. The most genuine claim seems to be by Mack David whose 'Sunflower' song of 1948 is identical through four complete bars with 'Hello Dolly.' Here is a small measure of compensation for Wenrich. Next to Dolly and Red Roses, Wenrich's favorite theme seems to be sunflowers. But if Percy were living today he could enter his claim of authorship to 'Hello Dolly' along with Mack David and the rest.

Arnett Delonais in 1907 brought out a Wenrich two-step entitled 'Flower Girl.' I thought for a moment the yellow flowers on the cover were sunflowers, but they're not. The trio is what we're looking for. This Wenrich theme would make a perfect accompaniment to 'Hello Dolly.' The melodic similarity is not as strong as in the 'Sunflower' song, but the chord structure as a whole is almost identical, and in this sense 'Flower Girl' is more suggestive of 'Hello Dolly' than Mack David's song. Now if we could only prove infringement, Dolly could be revealed as Mrs. Percy Wenrich.

The idea of sunflowers in connection with Dolly can be pursued a little further. 'Sunflower Rag' of 1911 is familiar to all and many claim it is the greatest of the Wenrich rags. But of more immediate interest is a number brought out by McKinley in 1908 entitled 'Sunflower Tickle - a Rag' by Dolly Richmond. This is a fine Western-style

rag. If Percy Wenrich were to use a pen name, what better name than Dolly could he use? Though there is no proof that he wrote 'Sunflower Tickle,' there are two things going for us that suggest he did. The most inportant one is the music itself. The only other person who wrote rags like this is Charles L. Johnson. But Johnson, for purposes of development and continuity, usually limited himself to three themes. This piece has all the Wenrich cliches including the usual trio introduction in ascending and descending notes plus four exceptionally melodic and rhythmic themes. Secondly there is the circumstances of its publication. It is contained in a set of five rags published by McKinley in 1908. The other four are 'Dixie Kicks' . . . 'Memphis Rag' . . . 'Ragtime Ripples' (all three by Percy Wenrich) . . . and 'Sassafras Sam' by George Grace.

It's just possible that McKinley wanted to give the impression they had more than one good rag writer on their roster. As a matter of passing interest, I think George Grace is another pen name for Wenrich, but his rag isn't as stimulating as Dolly Richmond's. I don't have 'Dixie Kicks,' but 'Memphis' and 'Ripples' are as fine as any Wenrich ever wrote short of 'Sunflower Rag' by Dolly Connolly's husband and 'Sunflower Tickle' by Dolly Richmond.

* * * * * * * * *

Roger's article was accompanied by a number of interesting photographs of sheet music and covers which we unfortunately cannot reproduce because of space and/or copyright restrictions. One photo shows a page from the Columbia Double-Disc Record Catalog of December, 1916, with the listing: "CONNOLLY, DOLLY (Mrs. Percy Wenrich), contralto" followed by a list of her recorded songs. Other photos show sheet music covers of Wenrich songs which feature pictures of Dolly Connolly: 'Come Back, Dixie' . . . Dolly Connolly's 'Egyptian Rag' . . . Dolly Connolly's Red Rose Song 'The Red Rose Rag' . . . 'Alamo Rag' Song . . . Dolly Connolly's Big Hit 'When You Wore a Tulip' . . . and 'Mandy, How Do You Do' Dolly Connolly's 'Mandy' Song. -Ed.

"CONCERT IN RAGTIME" REVIEWS:

John Arpin: "Concert in Ragtime." Scroll 101, $5.00 (LP) from The Ragtime Society, P.O. Box 8, King, Ontario, Canada.

This is a most unusual disc—a collection of excellent piano rags played by a pianist who combines an appreciation of the style with a musicianly technique. Until quite recently the best contemporary ragtime pianists have been primarily entertainers or jazz-trained musicians. Arpin, a twenty-nine-year-old Canadian, is a conservatory-trained pianist who came to ragtime after his professional career had already begun to develop. He brings to his performances a matured musicianship which enables him to bring out the full beauty of these pieces without diminishing their rollicking gaiety. The program includes two pieces each by three of the great rag composers—Scott Joplin (his concert waltz, *Bethena*, is a particularly charming work), James Scott, and Joseph Lamb; a delightfully gay 1899 rag by Charles Hunter, *Tickled to Death*; a melodic piece from the end of the ragtime era, *Sleepy Hollow Rag*, which Arpin graces with an affectingly gentle melodic touch; the pianist's own panoramic arrangement of *Bill Bailey*—a fresh and spirited view of this well-worn opus; his own lively composition, *Centennial Rag*; and two Jelly Roll Morton compositions on which he captures Morton's piano style brilliantly. This is the best-recorded collection of piano rags that I know of and it is, I suspect, the most authentically performed.

JOHN S. WILSON

◀ Reprinted from the March, 1966 issue of High Fidelity

Excerpted from Jazz Report, Nov-Dec 1965 issue:

"That sly bunch in Toronto have done it again, pulled another major ragtime talent out of the clear blue, and again, one who has played ragtime for only a short time and still hasn't reached a 30th birthday. If this doesn't auger well for the future of ragtime I don't know what does. . . . This is most definitely a hauntingly beautiful and musically valuable LP. . . . this varied and dynamic set constitutes an absolute must in the collection of <u>any</u> lover of good piano." Paul E. Affeldt

Excerpted from The Ragtime Review, January 1966:

"(John Arpin's) first LP is a true milestone in recorded ragtime, displaying an unusually high level of technical ability as well as a refreshing approach to dynamics. He has an infectious bounce in his playing; a strong affirmative touch with plenty of guts. It is the delicacy and polish coupled with an understanding of the explicit elements in classic ragtime that makes Arpin's style great. . . . Any ragtime record collector should consider his collection incomplete without this Arpin LP, and I look forward to more of the Arpin style on records." Trebor Tichenor

REPRINT CLUB

Next mailout to the Reprint Club will include the following numbers:

WHITTLING REMUS Thomas E. Broady
DIXIE DIMPLES James Scott
REFLECTION RAG Scott Joplin
SOLACE - A MEXICAN SERENADE Scott Joplin
AGITATION RAG Robert Hampton

These numbers are now available to non-members of the Reprint Club at $1 each postpaid, minimum order $2.

It's still not too late to join the Reprint Club. Ten dollars mailed now will bring you the five above numbers, plus all back numbers for the year, plus all future issues. Our vice-president in charge of the Reprint Club tells us that current members are guaranteed 24 rags this year -- a half dozen more than last year. This works out to just over 40 cents per rag, which is just about as inexpensive as you can get. Join now!

OTHER SHEET MUSIC

Jim Kinnear reports that there are just seven copies of Max Morath's epic "100 Ragtime Classics" folio left in stock. For those of you who are unfamiliar with this magnificent folio, we recommend it absolutely as the finest of its kind -- 100 ragtime gems to delight the heart of any rag pianist, plus an informative foreword by Max. Price: $15.00 postpaid from the Society.

TREEMONISHA

John Hill, our man in charge of the Treemonisha project, reports that he has enrolled 12 subscribers requesting a total of 16 copies of the Joplin opera. (For details of this publishing venture, see the back page supplement in the February, 1966 Newsletter.) To make this venture feasible, a minimum of about 30 copies would have to be printed. This is absolutely the last chance and remember -- if Treemonisha is published, there will be no extra copies available at a later date. Even if you are not able to make use of a copy of the opera personally, you might consider donating one to your local music library, choral group, etc. John Hill is the man to contact; his address is 2038 Springhouse Road, Broomall, Penna., 19008.

PORTABLE ELECTRIC PIANO PLAYER

We received a note from Gale Foehner, our friendly piano tuner-technician in Rochester, N.Y., who enclosed some literature about the Dynavoice Piano Player. This is an electric roll-playing device which sits on the key blocks of any standard piano, weighs less than 35 lbs. and sells for $350 retail. Gale says that if he got enough inquiries from ragophiles he could order six machines, get the exclusive territory in his area, and sell them for $295. Since we've never seen one of these Dynavoice players, we can't vouch for them personally, but presumably Gale can and does. Anyone interested in his offer should write to Gale Foehner, 171 Cloverland Drive, Rochester, N.Y., 14610.

PERFORMER PROFILE

The following article is reprinted from the Toronto 'Globe and Mail' of February 26, 1966:

A dual personality at the keyboard

By PATRICK SCOTT

At 8:25 p.m. the piano player at the Last Chance Saloon, having just regaled his listeners with a stirring rendition of Ragtime Rosie Ragged the Rosary, topped off his recital with the inevitable Maple Leaf Rag, brushed the sawdust off his striped vest and headed for the bar.

At 9:10 p.m. the pianist at Mister Tony's glided discreetly into Cole Porter's You Go to My Head without so much as rippling the surface of the pink gin belonging to a pale, intense young man writing poetry at a nearby table.

The most arresting facets of these two vignettes were the grace and professionalism of both piano performances—and the singular situation that found each featuring the same gifted pianist.

John Arpin, at 29, enjoys the best of two worlds: as a serious (but far from solemn) student of ragtime, he is able to devote the first three hours of each working night to the works of such masters as Scott Joplin, Joseph Lamb and James Scott; as a classically schooled pianist, he is able to fill the final four hours with the sounds of Chopin, Debussy, Gershwin and Kern—the perfect pot-pourri for the patrons of Mister Tony's.

And the logistical problems involved in his nightly metamorphosis from ragtime raconteur to salon serenader pose a challenge he meets with ease.

"It's really just a matter of shedding the vest," he says.

The vest—a sartorial feature regarded as de rigueur in such surroundings as the Last Chance Saloon—comes off sharp at 8:30 when Arpin, pausing only briefly to quench his thirst and the protests of a fan for whom he might that night have neglected to essay the Leola Two Step, exchanges it for a dinner jacket and embarks for Mister Tony's.

The distance between the Last Chance and Mister Tony's is less than two miles geographically and roughly a continent culturally.

The Last Chance, the Ports of Call's version of a frontier saloon, features swinging doors with waitresses to match. (The latter's cleavage exceeds the former's by about one quarter of an inch but to date the management has recorded no complaints from the customers.) Its house band, Larry Dubin's Big Muddys, has set the musical motif since the night the room opened three years ago, and its patrons are not only boisterous but surprisingly knowledgeable musically. They sing along, it is true, and make requests for Bill Bailey; but they also request—and obviously savor—such authentic ragtime classics as Clarence Woods' Sleepy Hollow Rag, a number that serves to illustrate perhaps more than any other John Arpin's stature in this oft-maligned genre.

Arpin, who received a conservatory degree at the age of 16 and who once taught at St. Michael's Cathedral Choir School, takes his ragtime seriously—but not too seriously. He can evoke all the genuine beauty of a number like Sleepy Hollow and then sing a slice of pure hokum like Ragtime Rosie in the Max Morath manner.

But at Mister Tony's, an ultra-exclusive and expensive Yorkville retreat where one could cut the elegance with a knife and the steaks with a spoon, the atmosphere is scarcely conducive to Ragtime Rosie.

Yet Arpin, now almost invisible behind a baby grand in a darkened corner, remains equally at home.

"I love show tunes as much as I do ragtime," he says, "and a lot of the customers at Mister Tony's are after-theatre people and theatre people themselves. Someone may come in one night and ask for Jerome Kern, and I like to think that I can give him everything Kern ever wrote. I once figured out that I know 2,000 tunes."

Arpin, who is prized, properly, by the patrons of Mister Tony's as the finest cocktail pianist in Toronto, enjoys equivalent esteem among the city's ragtime buffs.

They regard him so highly, in fact, that, under the auspices of the Ragtime Society, they have issued a long-play album called Concert in Ragtime (Scroll LSCR-101) that features Arpin in a brilliant solo recital of many of the works he is performing these evenings at the Last Chance Saloon (including Sleepy Hollow Rag). Among its other selections — all of which are rendered with the uncommon balance of enthusiasm and discipline that good ragtime demands — is an Arpin original, Centennial Rag, which will be published as part of a Centennial Year series of new Canadian compositions.

The only thing rarer than a good cocktail pianist is a good ragtime pianist — which is why John Arpin, who is both the same night, six nights a week, may be the healthiest schizophrenic in Canada today.

—Globe and Mail, Erik Christensen

"It's really just a matter of shedding the vest," pianist John Arpin says.

As a result of our recent item about music autography, Gale Foehner kindly sent along the following article which is reprinted from the February, 1966 issue of Piano Trades Magazine:

by Tom Hils

This Engraver Like Swings!

Reprinted by permission of the editor from PRINTING IMPRESSIONS *October,* 1965

HAND ENGRAVING OF MUSIC is one skill that machines are not forcing into oblivion.

According to Alfred Reed, one of the managers and arrangers at Hansen Publications, Inc., in Miami Beach, "It's the other way around — the growing scarcity of skilled engravers has forced music printers to invent and adapt engraving machines."

There's a lot of swing going on at Hansen's, too. There's a piano always ready among the machines and employees are always leaving their desks to bat out a swinging melody. When the workers do this, the bosses never raise an eyelash, for it's all part of the job — printing and publishing sheet music.

In fact, the piano — strange as it seems — is an important factor in this business. This musical instrument is a great help, both in proofreading and arranging the music. For if it doesn't sound right on the piano — "it just ain't right" — so there's a mistake somewhere. And the mistake must be found before the sheet is printed.

Two of the old-timers in the engraving department are William Henze and Victor Handel. The latter is no relation to the late famed music composer, but Vic is certainly well named for the work he's doing. The tedious clinking on pewter plates has earned these men the name of The Flintstones.

They figure it takes a seven-year apprenticeship — at least — to fully learn the intricacies of music engraving.

Asked to give a detailed report on this highly specialized work, Handel told us, "There's great variety in this type of work. Each plate is like a picture when we are finished with it. A hand-etched sheet is much more artistic than a machine engraved one."

Handel continued to explain the intricate process as he handled one of the hundreds of German-made dies he uses to etch each plate: "The hand engraver here must have an accurate eye to space the notes and words correctly. He must also be able to read music backwards, like a typesetter in a print shop."

The motto of the Hansen printing house is "The Quality of Engraving Determines the Readability of Music."

This unique Beach firm is one of the few companies in the United States that arranges a full line of music, prints it, and then publishes it. Most companies of this type do only one or two of these jobs.

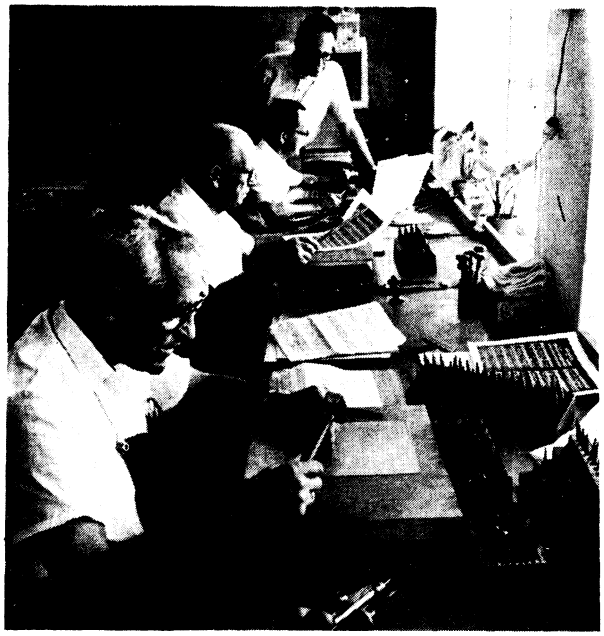
AN ANCIENT CRAFT

Music printing is a very interesting process — and a difficult one to understand for the layman. It is a very old craft that began with the etching of square notes on a block of wood from which elaborate hymn books were printed. Usually this work was done by monks.

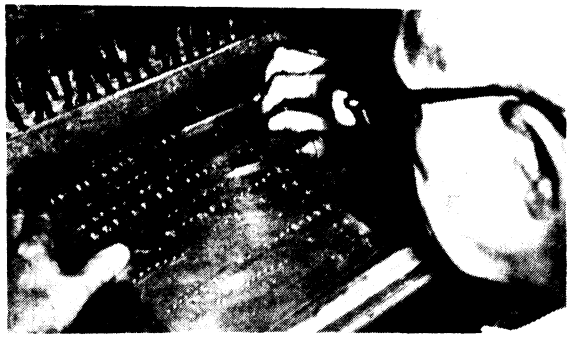
At the present time, there are three accepted methods of engraving music for printing. They are etching notes by hand onto pewter plates with steel dies, using a music engraving machine, and setting the notes in type.

Hand etching is still the preferred of the three methods. Because most of the living craftsmen are in their 60's and 70's, it is feared that this precision skill will eventually die out, giving way to the music typing machines. The other method — typography — is used mainly for hymn books and rarely for other kinds of music.

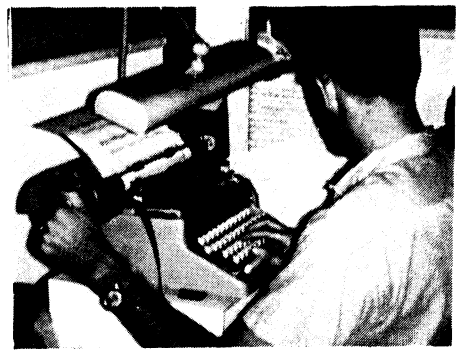
At Hansen's machine engraving department, the Musictyper and Musicwriter are two relatively new devices that are making up for the increasing lack of skilled



Above, left to right: Hand engravers Bill Henze, Mike Bree, and Vic Handel. Arranger-manager Al Reed looks on.



Left: Bill Henze engraves on metal by hand, using centuries-old art.



Left: Randy Birk and Hank Kass use specially adapted engraving machines. Above: Duane Kramer uses Musicwriter.

hand engravers. The Musictyper is a semi-circular keyboard that slides across a page of drawn lines and spaces.

Here the operator guides the contraption across the staff to the proper line or space. For this work he must be very accurate and have as good an eye as the hand engraver. As the next step, he punches one of the keys and an eighth note, or a grace note, or a whole note, shows up in black on the line or space.

A chord is engraved by punching the keyboard several times in one place in the measure. The machine is moved up or down to place a note on each line or space.

The Musicwriter looks very much like a standard typewriter but has a longer carriage and revised keyboard and spacer. Every key has two notes. The top one prints when the lock shift is pressed, very much like typing a capital letter on a regular typewriter.

There are several teachers and professional and amateur musicians on the staff at Hansen's. Former college professors make up the group doing the arranging.

The boss of the engraving section, Ted Ross, thinks a musical background is a must in this work, but there are a few skilled craftsmen who never learned to play a musical instrument. But all can read music.

When a sheet of music is engraved and the title, words, credits, and copyright added, it is proofread and sent to the printing department, where offset printing is used.

Most of the 100 employees at Hansen's are men, but the company would like to interest more women in music engraving, for this work is quite suited to feminine finger dexterity and artistic hands.

The firm was originally established in New York City but moved to its present Beach address in 1958 after first relocating in Miami, Fla., in 1956.

Hansen's, with headquarters at 1824-42 West Avenue, Miami Beach, is now one of the largest music printing and publishing companies in the world. It is also a sales and distribution center for other music publication firms in the United States. Other offices are located in New York City, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, St. Louis, and in New Jersey.

A compact organization, Hansen's operates its own mailing, stock, and accounting departments in addition to the other units already mentioned. Its accounting section has more than its share of problems with which to contend. For instance, it has the added headache of keeping track of all royalties, due or payable, on every sheet of music published.

All these departments are in three or four large, separate buildings, scattered on both sides of West Avenue, near one of the main streets on the Beach.

In the over-all setup, Hansen's musical publishing is divided into five departments:

Editorial — which supervises selection of music, format, style, pricing and sales, and determines exact size of the page-sheets needed.

Music Preparation — editing by experienced men with a musical background or talent, who must visualize in advance what the final printed sheet will look like. They also must determine to what age group a particular musical piece will be most adaptable.

Engraving — split into the oldest method, that of hand-hammering on plates, and the newest, typo-engraving by machine.

Proofreading — This is perhaps the most important work in musi-

continued on page 88

This Engraver Swings *continued from page 87*

cal publishing. There is no margin for error here, for a mistake in a note is vastly more sinful than misspelling a word in a newspaper. So that there will be no mistakes, proofreaders read copy twice, once after the initial make-up and the second time to make sure all previous corrections have been made.

The fifth department is the Art section, which has charge of dressing up the music with colors and illustrations and has to do with the preparation of all brochures and promotion for all types of music.

Charles H. Hansen, founder and president, is an old musical hand himself. He previously worked with the famous Mills Music Co. in New York City and the Edwin H. Morris Co. of New York. Music is his first and only career. He started working with music as a teenager and has loved and stayed with it ever since.

Hansen started forming his own musical publishing company as far back as 1945 in New York while still keeping up with his duties with the United States Coast Guard. He finally established the concern at Miami Beach in 1958 and really went into full swing and added his own printing department in late 1960 and 1961.

He still retains his practiced ear for music, and according to Al Reed, no mean arranger himself, "can hear or detect a flat or discordant note a mile away."

PERFORMERS

We had a pleasant note from Marvin Ash who was introduced to the Society by Robert Blay. Marvin, who is living in Encino, California, says: "I would like to state that I haven't entirely disappeared from the scene. I just haven't had the time or the sponsors to pursue 'our kind of music.' For the past eleven years I have been the pianist with the Walt Disney Studio Orchestra (hardly a mecca for ragtimers). Coupled with my outside interests as a freelance musician, it leaves little time for ideology.

"To update you on a piece of literature you might not be aware of, I recorded for The Jazz Man Recording Co. of Hollywood on Sept. 14, 1954. On this LP 335, with liner notes by Michael Uris, I recorded eight seldom-performed rag pieces. Among these were: 'A Ragtime Skeedadler's Ball' by Geo. Rosey, 'Old Man Jazz' by Gene Quaw, and 'Ragtime Romeo' by William B. Friedlander. I did this album at the request of the Edward B. Marks Music Corp."

In a recent issue we asked if anyone knew anything about Ray Turner. Rudi Fehr of Burbank, California, writes: "I am happy to report that Mr. Turner is alive and kicking and very active as a pianist, mostly in motion picture studios. He has lived in Beverly Hills, California, for many years. He was delighted that there is still interest in his ragtime performances and he mentioned to me that this item in your periodical may be the impetus for him to record more rags."

Those are heartwarming words, Rudi. Any move in that direction would receive our warmest support and encouragement. It seems to us that you are in an ideal position to get together with Messrs. Ash, Turner and Blay -- an LP featuring Marvin Ash and Ray Turner could just possibly result. Failing this, Performer Profiles of both these men would be valuable contributions to the Newsletter.

Percy Franks reports that he will be doing club dates in and around Kansas City until May 2nd, when he returns to the Bro[a]dmoor Hotel (that's the way they print it), Colorado Springs, for six weeks.

Philadelphia member John Hill and his business associate John Howard paid a recent visit to Toronto, which gave Jim Kinnear and your Editor a welcome chance to get out of the house and into some of the local nitespots. First stop was the Last Chance Saloon at the Ports of Call where John Arpin and banjoist John Sherman are holding forth in fine style on a pleasant mixture of classic rags and tunes from the Twenties (see Performer Profile).

Then on to the Golden Nugget, a spot which we hadn't visited since Bob Darch decamped nearly a year ago. The current group at the Nugget is fronted by Henry Cuesta (clarinet) and Marty Grosz (guitar & banjo), plus bass and drums. Cuesta must be one of the greatest clarinets going these days. And Grosz, particularly on guitar, generates more rhythm by himself than any five-man animal band ever dreamed of; he also treats his banjo as a musical instrument and produces some very pleasant and articulate sounds. The group's repertoire is not ragtime by any means -- Lulu's Back in Town, We're in the Money, etc -- but is exciting listening nonetheless. The combination of a powerhouse rhythm section behind a smooth clarinet may sound unbalanced in theory, but in practice it's pure driving swing.

From Harold Doerr, Springfield, Mo.: "Just received word from Ray Rose that he has recovered from an auto accident and that he will be playing at Rochester. We had a grand reunion at our home January 2, 3 & 4 of Bob Wright of Chicago, Trebor Tichenor of the Goldenrod, and the Crown Prince of Ragtime Gary Ellison of Springfield. Among the guests were Mary Green of Joplin who together with Gary taped the proceedings. Also present were our good ragtime researchers from Kansas City, Mr. and Mrs. Doug Jydstrup. Bob Wright is currently playing at a Chicago nitespot and Gary is putting in his final licks for graduation from Southwest Missouri College in June, and is just playing special jobs.

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Here at Last—THE DIXIE STRINGS
featuring
● JOE GRIFFIN on Piano ● CLINT JOHNSON on Banjo
● LUKE McNELEY on Bass
The No. 1 Ragtime Trio in the Midwest

"Am sending along a picture (left) of a new ragtime discovery who is making many ragtime friends, and plays in the style of Tom Shea, Johnny Arpin and Bob Wright -- name, Joe Griffin; age 40, married; cleancut and friendly, dependable and dedicated, aiming to play at the best spots in the U.S.A. and Canada. He's easily the standout piano man in the southwest part of the State of Missouri. Joe Griffin is a real credit to the ragtime fraternity, and a lot of visitors stop at Shakey's and get a taste of Ragtime till the next stop on Route 66 -- St. Louis and the Goldenrod Showboat."

Gary Ellison tells us he's set for a return engagement at Denver's Cherry Creek Inn in November, The Gas Lamp in Omaha for June and Mickey Mantle's Holiday Inn in Joplin (date unknown). Sounds as if Gary has a full year ahead because according to Harold Doerr he's planning to go to Hollywood for a television program of his own as soon as he completes his college work in June.

FROM OUR READERS

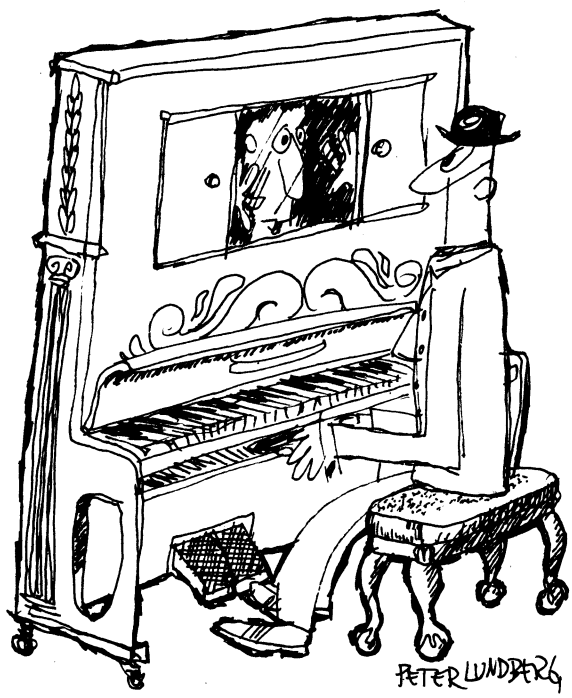
Rudi Fehr, California: "I have been trying to find the LP of the 'Elite Syncopations' played by Chris Barber's Jazz Band. I had a friend in New York contact the Jazz Record Center, as per your suggestion in the November-December Newsletter. However, they advised him that they have not had a copy for some time. I also had a friend contact the Columbia Record Company in London and he was advised that this particular LP has been cut out of the catalog some time ago. Could you possibly give me any other clues as to where I may locate this recording?"

We've run out of clues, Rudi, but perhaps some of our readers - particularly in the U.K. - might be able to help; if so, please contact us as P.O. Box 8, King, Ontario and we'll publish the information.

Robert McGrath, who has been an enthusiastic member and contributor to the Newsletter, writes that he has entered St. Paul's Monastery in Pittsburgh as a Novice and will be unable to continue his Society membership: "I do wish to say that I have thoroughly enjoyed every issue of the Society's Newsletter and all its projects and activities. Please continue your good work for this truely fine American music." Bob would be glad to receive letters from Society members; his address is St. Paul's Monastery, Pittsburgh, Pa., 15203.

Brian Earwaker, a new member, writes: "I play banjo and piano, and would be interested in corresponding with any banjoists in the Society." Brian's address is 22 Ashburton Rd., Southsea, England.

Gale Foehner, Rochester, N.Y.: "I just found two old 33 1/3 records, era 1946 to 1950, I imagine, with Frank Froeba playing Old Time Piano, unfortunately marred by the addition of strings, etc. The other one is terrific, called 'Ragtime Piano' by Willis 'The Rock' Knox and his Orch. The numbers are: Some of These Days; She's Nobody's Sweetheart Now; Sweet Sue; Margie; Darktown Strutter's Ball; Honeysuckle Rose; Maple Leaf Rag; and New Orleans Rag (composer credits to R. Hyman). This is on a Waldorf Music-Hall Record, #MH33147-A, and any information about the player would be appreciated. The style is very raggy, and sounds a little like Armand Hug. There is a lot of corny drums, whistles and things, but aside from that, a very raggy St. Louis and New Orleans style to it."



Announcing: The Second Annual Ragtime Society 'Bash'

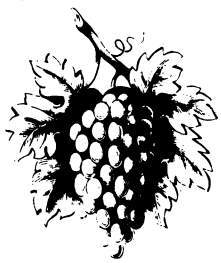
Our first soiree last year was such a success that we're staging a repeat performance, so . . . set aside the evening of Saturday, June 18th!!

A Toronto member has graciously offered the use of his well-equipped home for the occasion; facilities include two pianos (one a player), a great collection of sheet music, a four-track stereo tape recorder and a stereo phonograph. Bring your rolls, tapes and records for an evening of fine ragtime.

As in the past, we're working this on an R.S.V.P. basis -- please use the coupon at the bottom of this page to let us know you're coming. As soon as we get your coupon (and your money), we'll send you a confirmation by return mail, plus complete directions on "how to get there." We again offer our Travellers Aid service for out-of-town members -- information about local hotels/motels, strategically located liquor stores, etc. If we can help you in any way, just ask.

For the modest sum of $1.50 per head, you will be provided with food, coffee, mixers and ice cubes. All you have to bring is your own booze. Free skimmers for the gentlemen, free snuff for the ladies.

Please note the May 15th deadline -- send your coupon before that date so that we can count you in. Don't delay, mail today!!



The Ragtime Society
P.O. Box 8
King, Ontario
Canada

IMPORTANT: PLEASE RETURN THIS COUPON BEFORE MAY 15TH

Count me in! I enclose $_____ to cover ____ persons (@ $1.50 each).

The name of my wife/friend/husband is _____

I would like information about ( ) Hotel ( ) Motel accommodations for the following dates:

Name _____

Address _____

_____

CHARLIE plays great

RAG PIANO . . .

SO WE RECORDED HIM FOR THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

RSR-4

By Tom Shea

Photos by Walt Gower

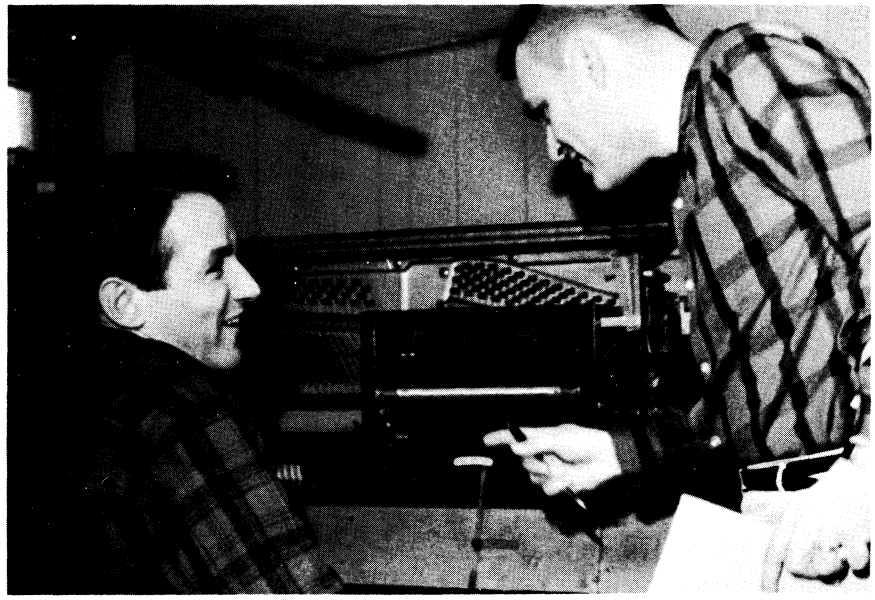
Charlie Rasch has been playing professionally in the Detroit-Ann Arbor, Michigan area for about three years now. He plays such a good brand of rag piano that his reputation has spread beyond the bounds of his home area and people come from all over Michigan and Ohio to hear him.

As a matter of fact, Charlie has one fan from as far away as Toronto, Ontario who stops by when he can. His name is Jim Kinnear - our own Ragtime Society Secretary. Jim felt that Charlie's talent should be recognized and asked me to make arrangements for recording him for the Ragtime Society.

Charlie is from Birmingham, Michigan, and is still in his 20's. He holds a Masters Degree in Fine Arts from the University of Michigan - although to see him hunch his left shoulder up high and weave back and forth, playing rags, stomps, and blues like some "Easy Street Professor", you'd never guess it.

On the job, he has a vaguely aristocratic, 1920's appearance; handsome in his too-wide ties, black and white wing tip shoes and other accouterments of a bygone day. He looks a lot like that society playboy in the old movies who always bursts through the door with a tennis racket in his hand to ask, "Tennis anyone?"

Charlie began playing rags in 1953 after coming across a copy of the MAPLE LEAF RAG in a second hand store. Although he had been studying the piano for several years and felt at ease with the intracacies of a Bach Invention or a Chopin Etude, it took two months of hard work to learn to play the MAPLE LEAF. He kept at it willingly though, because he found that it, "really sizzled -



Last January 8th, Charlie, Walt Gower, and I went to Ann Arbor, Michigan for the recording session.

The recording was done by John Teachout, owner of the Idiom Recording Company of Ann Arbor. Those of you who own Boll Weevil Jass Band albums will be familiar with John's ability as a recording engineer and as a banjoist.

The recording session went off without a hitch except for one minor problem with the piano. As Charlie was playing through a particularly rousing section of SLIPPERY ELM RAG, one of the keys came off under the strain and fell to the floor with a clatter.

right off the page."

After his discovery of the MAPLE LEAF RAG, he began to collect any sheet music that said "Rag" on the cover.

From the wealth of ideas and rhythm contained on the pages of this primal body of hot piano arrangements, Charlie laid the foundation for what would become his own, unique piano style.

As his interest in rag piano grew, a style based on recordings and piano rolls of Jelly Roll Morton, Clarence Johnson, Lemual Fowler, and others began to develop. Unlike many traditionalist pianists though, Charlie has an amoebic ability to engulf and completely assimilate the "extras" used by these ancient hot piano greats, so that instead of building a patchwork of unrelated stylistic devices, Charlie weaves them together into a clear, perfectly integrated fabric of old and new.

He plays with great power, stroking the keys like some giant ten fingered musical engine operating at no more than half throttle. He never swings in the usual nervous, hurried sense of the word, instead he rolls the rhythms out in huge, calm clouds that billow out and around one another in ever changing patterns, each one in perfect keeping with the material being played.

As a rule, Charlie prefers to play rags that lend themselves to some degree of embellishment. The selections in his new album for the Ragtime Society provide proof of Charlie's ability to "claim them for his own" while retaining their original flavor.

The album consists of piano solos of the following:

Side One

ST. LOUIS TICKLE
SLIPPERY ELM RAG
FASHION RAG
NEW ORLEANS JOYS
BOOMERANG RAG
POSSUM RAG

Side Two

CASA LOMA STOMP
BLIND BOONE'S SOUTHERN RAG MEDLEY NO. ONE
BLIND BOONE'S SOUTHERN RAG MEDLEY NO. TWO
CUM-BAC RAG
WAR BRIDE BLUES
DOWN HOME RAG

RSR-4 "Ragtime Down The Line" by Charlie Rasch is now <u>in stock</u>, and is available to Society members at the usual prices:

single copy	$5.00 postpaid
2 copies	8.50 postpaid*
3 copies	12.00 postpaid*
5 copies	18.50 postpaid*

All prices marked with an asterisk (*) apply to one order shipped to <u>one</u> address; where more than one shipping address is involved, the single copy price ($5.00) will apply.

This price schedule applies to:

RSR-1 "Classic & Modern Rags" by Tom Shea
RSR-2 "Prairie Ragtime" by Tom Shea
RSR-3 "Concert in Ragtime" by John Arpin
RSR-4 "Ragtime Down The Line" by Charlie Rasch

<u>or any combination of the four</u>.

Please use the order form below to ensure prompt shipment:

The Ragtime Society
P.O. Box 8
King, Ontario

I enclose ( ) cheque ( ) money order ( ) cash in the amount of $_____
Please ship ____ copies of RSR-4 "Ragtime Down The Line" by Charlie Rasch to:

Name _____

Address _____

_____
(Please include postal zone or ZIP code)

Ragtime Society Records Catalog

RSR-1 CLASSIC & MODERN RAGS

Detroit pianist-composer Tom Shea plays seven of his own sparkling ragtime numbers plus six traditional classics by Scott Joplin and Tom Turpin:

Spasm Rag . . Hasty Pudding . . Venial Sin . . Johnny Walker Rag . . Prairie Queen . . Storyville Sport . . Black Mike's Curse . . Stoptime Rag . . Euphonic Sounds . . St. Louis Rag . . Something Doing . . Pineapple Rag . . Original Rags

"It is evident that Tom Shea has given much thought to the interpretation of the pieces . . . he has the rare ability of making this music come to life . . . there is a freshness that makes it eminently enjoyable. Anyone interested in ragtime (the real thing, that is) will want to own this recording." -CODA Magazine

RSR-2 PRAIRIE RAGTIME

Tom Shea's foot-stomping piano style on more oldies and originals:

Mississippi Rag . . Ma Ragtime Baby . . Swipesy Cakewalk . . Creole Belles . . Pegtown Patrol . . Brun Campbell Express . . R.F.D. . . Oliver Road Rag . . Trillium Rag . . Corinthian Rag . . Rosebud Rag

"The disc has been well recorded and, because of this, may prove a more inviting introduction to genuine ragtime than recordings of piano rolls or haphazard discs which preserve the work of earlier rag performances. Discs of this type are such rarities that the present one should be a basic part of a ragman's collection." -John S. Wilson, High Fidelity Magazine

RSR-3 CONCERT IN RAGTIME

Toronto pianist John Arpin gives superb interpretations of a wide variety of numbers by classic rag composers:

Leola Two Step . . Bethena - A Concert Waltz . . Efficiency Rag . . Great Scott Rag . . Bird-Brain Rag . . The Ragtime Nightingale . . Tickled to Death . . Sleepy Hollow Rag . . Bill Bailey . . Centennial Rag . . Cannon Ball Blues . . King Porter Stomp

"One of the most elusive qualities of classic piano ragtime is its grace and charm; perhaps 'felicity' is the word. At last we have an album to demonstrate this quality once and for all. Arpin's unerring taste combines with his flawless touch to capture every nuance of composers Joplin, Lamb and Scott.

"The quality of the recording is first-rate, and all the material is performed on a fine instrument. It's a great album . . . a landmark in the rediscovery of ragtime." -Max Morath